

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in Swahili (4SW0) Paper 1

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The following points were noted by examiners:

Question 1

This part of the examination is designed to test grammatical elements of the language.

Question 1a:

This sentence was testing the use object marking and of the –o –ote.e sentence structure. Not many students were able to translate this fully as ‘upepo haukuharibu nyumba yoyote’. Some candidates used the object ‘i’, rendering this as ‘upepo haikuharibu’ and also used the structure ‘yeyote’ which were wrong. Awareness of the Swahili noun class is essential.

Question 1b:

This question was testing the usage of the passive. Most students could translate. Some students translated grandmother as ‘shosho’. This is not a Swahili term. Only bibi and nyanya were allowed.

Question 1c:

This question was testing the passive and the subjunctive. Some students wrote ‘kukula’ and this is wrong.

Question 1d:

Here candidates were tested on the prepositional verb, ‘kesomea’. Most students were able to do this question.

Question 1e:

This question tested the locatives PO-KO-MO and also the prefix. Many students wrote ‘chakula ipo’; the correct structure is ‘chakula kipo’.

It is highly recommended to centres to teach and help candidates master the Swahili noun classes and to pay particular attention to Swahili object marking, prefixes and various tenses.

Question 2

This question tests transmission and Quality of Language. The process of translating into a target language encompasses all aspects of the language including grammar and general vocabulary. This question was based on a holiday trip to Zanzibar undertaken by a family.

Candidates performed well on this question. Students used standard Swahili terms and not non standard for words that were flagged up last year. This includes ‘wavyele’ and the writing of Swahili written as spoken in some cultures, for instance instead of ‘kufanya’ – ‘kufanyanga’ or ‘enye kufanyanga’.

However there was a clear distinction between the performances of less and more able candidates with the more able correctly translating words such as ‘map – ramani’ and ‘island – kisiwa’.

The majority of students did not know the Swahili word for 'the Indian Ocean – bahari ya hindi'; and translated this as 'bahari india', 'india osheni', 'bahari ya wahindi', 'bahari ya India'. Similarly the word 'map' was wrongly rendered as 'michoro' and 'dira'. The word 'island' was wrongly translated as 'ziwa'. There is a need for students to learn vocabulary and know translations of simple items such as 'capital city', 'sand' and 'beach'.

Question 3

The passage was about football. This question seems to have been quite accessible. There were however a few translations that incorrectly translated such as Ulaya (Europe) as 'England', 'abroad', and even 'USA'.

As in question 2 it tests transmission and Quality of Language. The process of translating into a target language encompasses all aspects of the language including grammar and general vocabulary. It is highly recommended that basic grammatical structures are stressed and revised before future examinations.

Candidates seem to do better when translating into English rather than into Swahili can be counteracted through their familiarisation with Swahili writings. Students need to read Swahili works.

Question 4

This question required candidates to express themselves in Swahili as it tested Communication and Content and also the Quality of Language. Candidates were to write an essay of 200-250 words on four topics:

Most candidates did the letter writing question and did very well as students included the structure of letters, paragraphs and wrote good responses.

Many of those who wrote a speech showed great language flair and awareness of social issues. Similarly environmental issues were tackled very well by those who wrote about trees/plants/greens.

There are however some points to consider for future improvements:

1. Swahili is an agglutinating language – candidates tend to separate grammatical structures thence impairing what they produce.
For instance, they write
 - Wa - nao- kutegemea instead of 'wanaokutegemea'.
 - Wa – li –nishauri instead of 'walinishauri'.
2. Candidates need to read good Swahili works by authors such as Farouk Topan, Adam Shafi etc so that they become familiar with the language as it is written in standard form. There is also a need for candidates to use Standard Swahili dictionaries so they may differentiate slang from standard.
3. Using appropriate idiomatic expressions in their work. For instance those who use expressions such as 'asiyefunzwa na mama hufunzwa na dunia' – resulted in scoring higher marks. Swahili has a number

of metaphors and sayings that embellish and show flair. These should be used in essays.

4. Although letter writing was done well by the majority of the candidates however, there were a number of responses that had no addresses or had placed the address of the receiver where the sender's should have been which then made them lose marks on structure. Also, some candidates had formal structured letters with informal language which were a contradiction. Lastly, letter writing should be distinguished from any other type of writing with addresses, date, heading, salutation, body and an appropriate conclusion.
5. Essay structures need to be re-visited prior to exams. Some candidates do not have an introduction, a body and a conclusion in their essays, nor do they use paragraphs to separate ideas. These are extremely important in essays.
6. Students need to be aware of the word count.
7. Can we also please recommend that students be proud of their handwriting and produce clear and concise pieces of writing? Ineligible writing may lead to loss of mark when an examiner cannot make out what has been written.

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